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ART DESIGN JEWELRY METAL

Fresh:

JURIED EXHIBITION IN PRINT 2011

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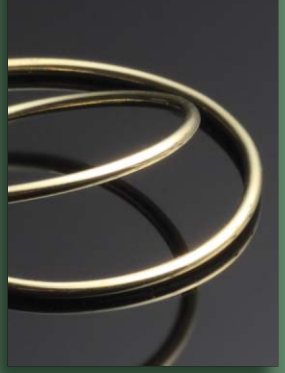

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SOFA, Chicago: November 3 – 7

IN LINE/IN METAL:
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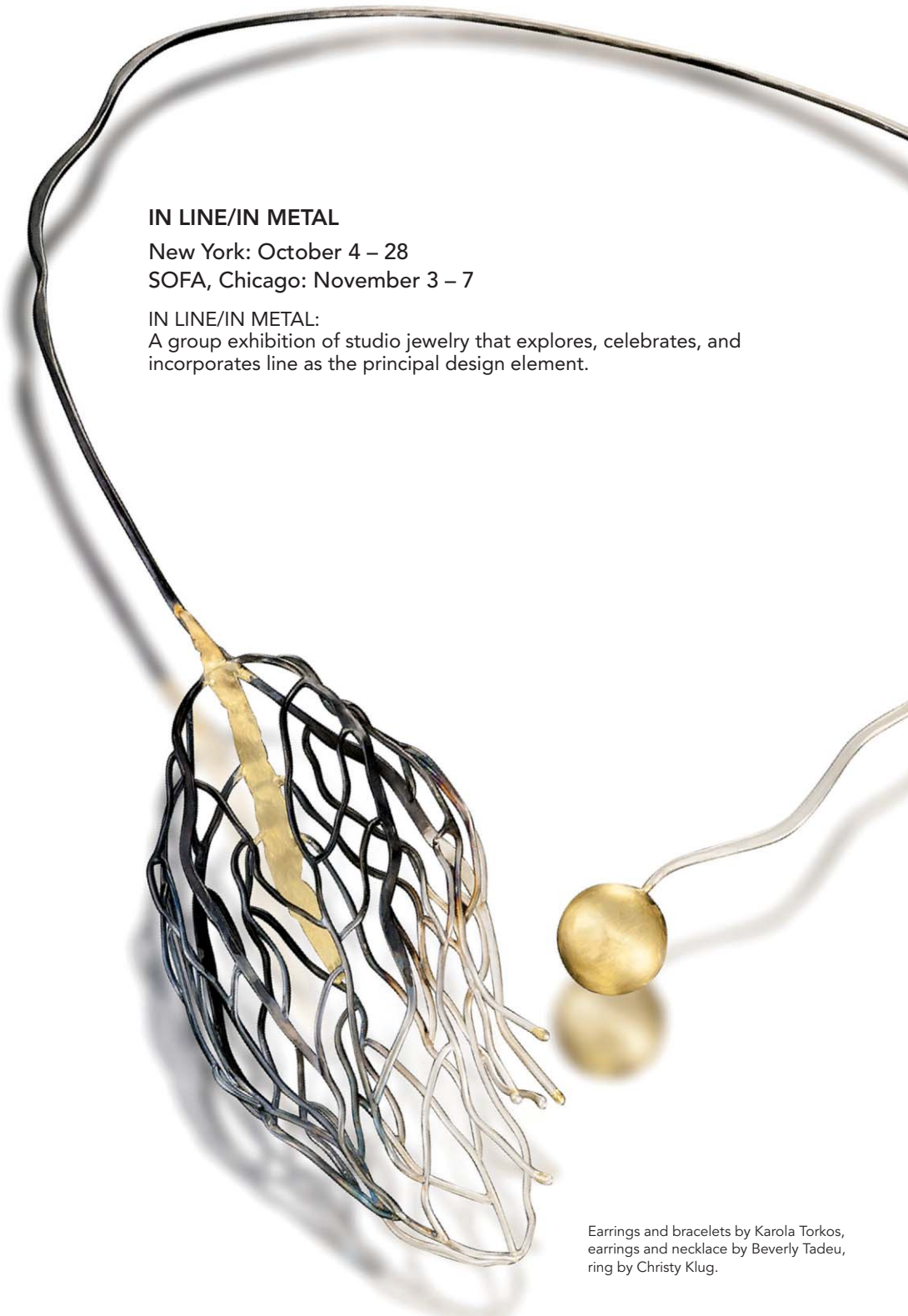

Earrings and bracelets by Karola Torkos, earrings and necklace by Beverly Tadeu, ring by Christy Klug.

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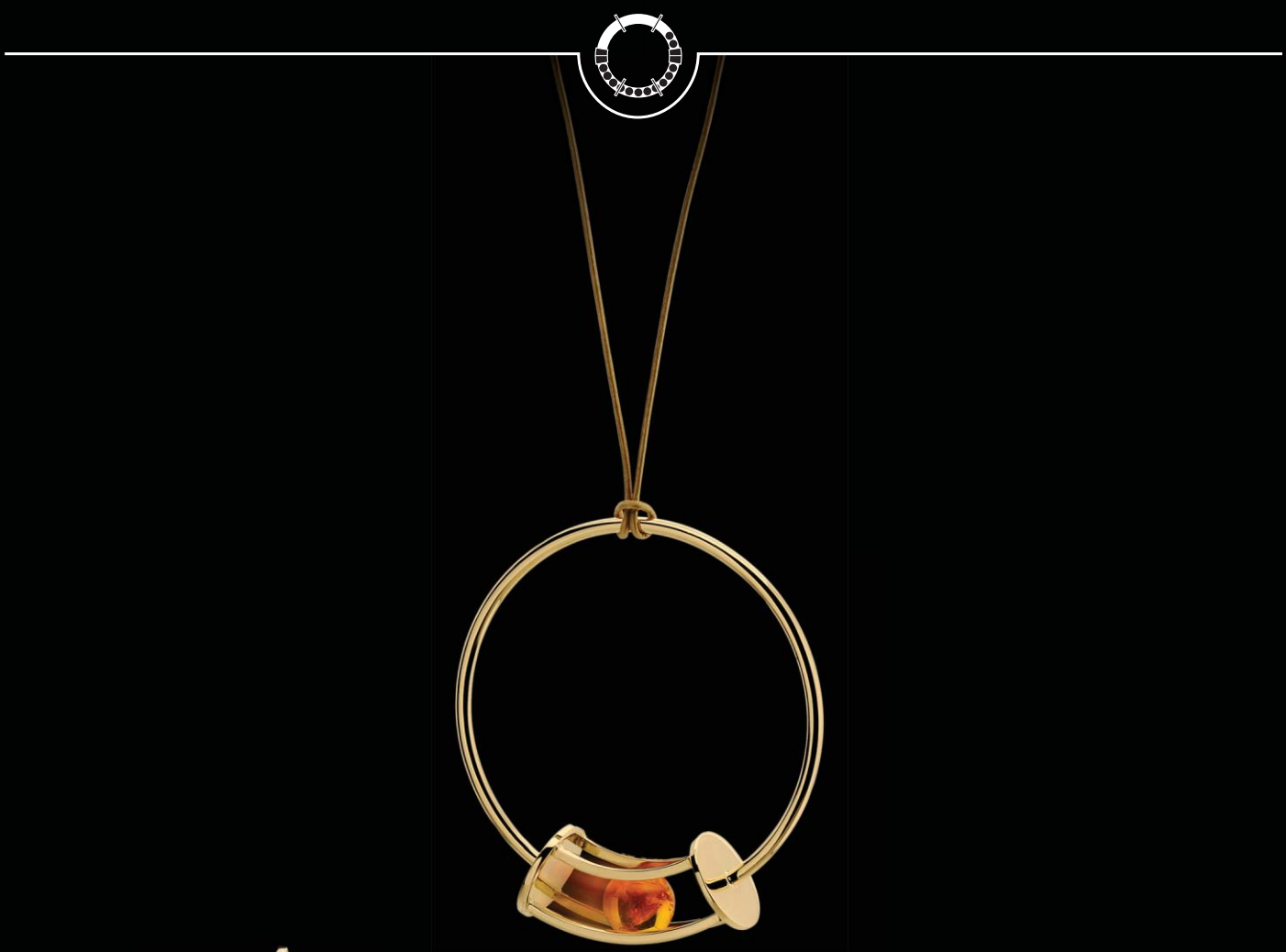

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photo almir pastore graphic design marcelo lopes

spinning curve bracelet handcrafted in 18k gold and amber
spinning top pendant handcrafted in 18k gold with aquamarine and diamond
spinning top line ring handcrafted in 18k gold and amethyst

Cover: AMY TAVERN
Brooch with Chain and Tassel, 2010
sterling silver, spray paint, cotton
36 x 3 ½ x 1"
PHOTO: HANK DREW

Juried Exhibition in Print 2011

Fresh

4 **Foreword**

10 **Jurors' Panel: Talking Fresh**
LOLA BROOKS AND CINDI STRAUSS

Featured Artists

46 **Stevie B.**
20 **Suzanne Beautyman**
48 **Nikky Bergman**
23 **Jim Bové**
34 **Sidney Caldwell Deaghlan**
45 **Namu Cho**
28 **Gabriel Craig and Amy Weiks**
30 **Jennifer Crupi**
36 **Adriane Dalton**
16 **Anja Eichler**
49 **Aliyah Gold**
22 **Kevin Hughes**
43 **Minwon Kim**
44 **Andrew Kuebeck**
35 **Robert Longyear**
32 **Timothy McMahon**
42 **Andrea Miller**
39 **Edgar Mosa**
33 **Seth Papac**
24 **Mary Hallam Pearse**
26 **Ryan Thomas Peters**
41 **Sara Pfau**
38 **Devin Ragotzy**
27 **Katie Rearick**
40 **Sondra Sherman**
19 **Natalie Smith**
52 **Amy Tavern**
37 **Stephanie Tomczak**
50 **Jennifer Trask**
18 **Andrea Wagner**

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Iris Eichenberg "Rhizome": August 2011

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THIS YEAR'S JURIED *Exhibition in Print* was promoted under the thematic banner of "Fresh," which served as a fetching catalyst in the issue's call for entries.

As the concept of "fresh" was not defined in the prospectus, artists were left on their own to determine whether their works possessed this essential quality. Indeed, a record 433 entrants submitted their newest, brightest work to this year's competition.

As it happens, our jurors Lola Brooks and Cindi Strauss did not readily find the freshness they sought. Ultimately, they felt compelled to endorse only 30 makers as embodying this trait. In their discussion published here, Brooks and Strauss lay bare their criteria and views on the field, touching on issues of education, tradition, and other factors that contribute to the production of great and stimulating work.

Aside from the jurors' own understanding of the meaning of "fresh," it is worth noting the term's more objective definitions in the dictionary, all of which are displayed throughout the selected works: newly made, acquired, or found; not stale; novel; original; most recent; not canned or otherwise preserved; bright or clear; invigorating; alert; refreshed; youthful or inexperienced; presumptuous or disrespectful; forward.

In the end, freshness proves to be a relative term, but it still remains irresistible in any form that it takes.... m

SUZANNE RAMLJAK
EDITOR

The mission of *Metalsmith* magazine is to document, analyze, and promote excellence in jewelry and metalsmithing. In fulfillment of the goal of producing a significant document of the field, editorial content will emphasize contemporary activities and ideas, with supportive content to include relevant historical work and critical issues.

metalsmith

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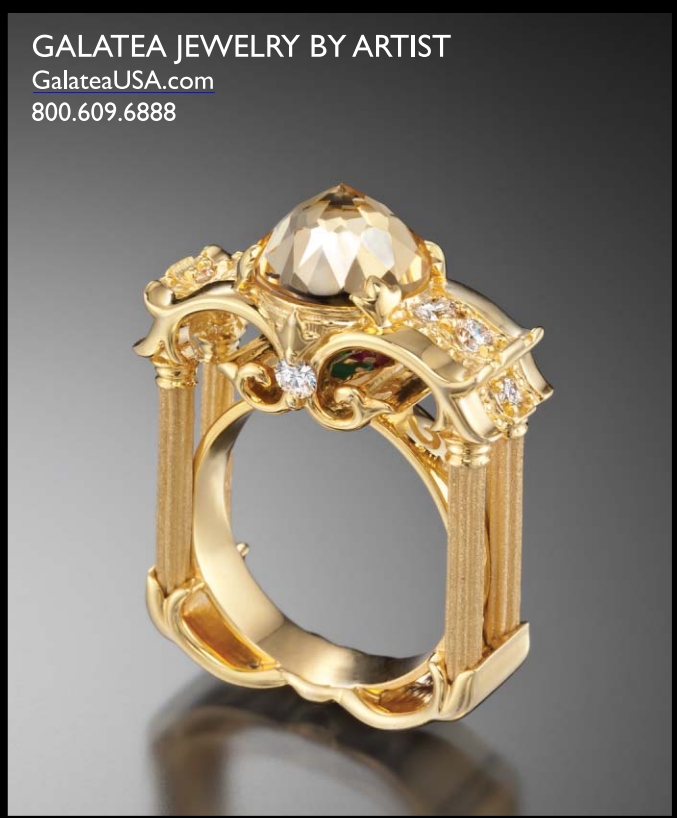

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JURIED EXHIBITION IN PRINT 2011

Jurors' Panel

Talking Fresh

Lola Brooks and Cindi Strauss get real with *Metalsmith* editor Suzanne Ramljak

Lola Brooks is an artist, metalsmith, clotheshorse, and sometimes writer living in New York City. She studied fashion at Pratt Institute and received her BFA in metals from SUNY New Paltz. Brooks has taught at Rhode Island School of Design, University of the Arts in Philadelphia, and SUNY New Paltz, as well as the 92nd St Y in NYC, Haystack, and Penland School of Crafts. Her work is in the collections of The Museum of Art and Design, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Cindi Strauss is Curator of Modern and Contemporary Decorative Arts and Design and Assistant Director, Programming, at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Her curatorial responsibilities include the acquisition and exhibition of post-1900 metalwork and jewelry. She was the exhibition curator and author of the accompanying catalogue, Ornament as Art: Contemporary Jewelry from the Helen Williams Drutt Collection *(2007), and has since written and lectured widely on jewelry.*

SUZANNE RAMLJAK: The call for entries for this *Exhibition in Print* generated quite a large response, with nearly 450 artists submitting work. Nonetheless, you only chose to feature 30 artists from this pool. While there was quantity, it seems that you did not find the quality or freshness you were looking for.

CINDI STRAUSS: Lola and I discussed that there wasn't a clear definition of "fresh" put forth in the call for entries; perhaps that ambiguity led to the large number of submissions. But the difficulty for us as jurors was that we *were* using specific criteria when we looked at the pool, while the entrants themselves had used their own definitions, and the two were not always in sync. So it was partly a question of whether the entered works lived up to our own expectations of "freshness."

LOLA BROOKS: I was very excited about this juror opportunity because I had this idea that I was going to discover something that I hadn't even known existed in the field. We ended up viewing four images from each of the 400-plus applicants, which is an overwhelming number of objects to consider. Ultimately it was disheartening, because when it came down to it, much of what was submitted was very traditional and in some cases was completely derivative of other, familiar work. I was disappointed that there weren't even examples of *traditional* work that were cutting edge. I would have loved to include an engagement ring that really blew my mind, or some killer production jewelry that challenged the idea of what production could be. Overall I would say that the pool *lacked* freshness.

CS: As jurors, Lola and I together represented a very broad perspective. Lola is a successful artist and educator, and I am a curator responsible for a global collection of jewelry that stretches back to the 1960s. As we were considering our final choices, we consistently asked ourselves: Have we seen this before? Where have we seen it? How is it "fresh"?

I had imagined that the majority of submissions were going to be from student types, whether recent graduates from undergraduate or graduate programs, or even artists who were still in school. But in reality there were a significant number of established artists, even those who had been working in the field for 30 or 40 years, who submitted work. That shows you the breadth of the individual definitions of "fresh."

LB: I suppose one could say that the traditions of metalworking are alive and well. There was a lot of metal represented, and even if it wasn't particularly interesting, some of it was very well crafted. As an educator, I do find this somewhat heartening, as I am definitely invested in perpetuating the traditions of metalsmithing. At the same time I found it a bit shocking, given that almost all of my students entering graduate school state a pointed interest in ditching metals and exploring alternative materials.

CS: I want to follow up on this predominance of metal. I was struck

ARTHUR HASH
Moss Ring, 2006
polyurethane, fake moss

It's like peeling an onion: looking at the many layers of how a work is made, what its concept is, its aesthetics—seeing what makes it worthy of being included.

by the fact that even though metal is really expensive right now, so many applicants are not only honoring and exploring metalworking traditions, but also taking risks with materials that are so frighteningly costly.

SR: Let's address the important question of criteria that was alluded to earlier. You said you brought a certain set of expectations to the table and that the majority of the submissions didn't meet them. Can you elaborate?

LB: I went into the jurying process with the attitude, "I'll know it when I see it." To some extent I don't think I really tried to define "fresh" for myself in advance. I was hoping that the pool of submissions would define it for me. I found it interesting that various candidates kept continually shifting how I had to think about the concept. As we winnowed down the selection, our standards changed; it became a relative process. So I started out thinking that I didn't know what "fresh" was and I was about to discover it. That is not exactly what happened.

There are also certain things I am especially interested in. With the idea of fresh, we are talking about the future of the metalsmithing field in some way. And one of the things I always look for is a respect for the traditions of the field. Another aspect that was critically important to me was that there be a level of mystery, that I was seduced by an object's craft. That craftsmanship could be in any material, but it had to show a certain respect for how things are put together.

CS: Apart from seeking something that I had not experienced before, I was looking for quality and how well designed or made an object was (as best as could be discerned from the images). Also, as Lola said, I felt I would know "fresh" when I saw it. Something strikes you and then you work toward articulating what that quality is. For example, we were both just really taken by Suzanne Beautyman's work, and we even ended up choosing to feature two of her pieces. Jennifer Trask's *Acanthus* piece also bowled us over, as did Anja Eichler's *Naughty Rabbit* and *Mare*, both made from gloves. Some works just struck us both with a rather indefinable quality that you feel in your gut; it excites you and makes your heart race. The work is visually captivating and it is something you want to hold and touch and learn more about. It is never just one aspect of a piece that I find incredibly appealing; it is usually a complete package, from which I work backwards to assess the individual qualities that drew me to it to begin with. It's like peeling an onion: looking at the many layers of how a work is made, what its concept is, its aesthetics—seeing what makes it worthy of being included.

SR: Whenever you have a call for submissions, you are obviously limited in your selection by those who apply. Stepping outside of the submitted entries, which other artists in the field embody a sense of freshness for you?

LB: I have to say I was pretty disappointed not to find many of my colleagues' work among the

MARTA MATTSSON
Atlas Beetle (brooch), 2010
copper electrofumed
Atlas beetle, cubic zirconias,
laquer, silver
4 3/8 x 2 x 1 1/4"

submissions. Märta Mattsson is someone whose work embodies my ideas about what is fresh. Her work is playful and irreverent and her love for materials is obvious. Mattsson's jewelry is at once bitter and sweet. Arthur Hash is another person I think fits the bill. He is incredibly prolific, and uses technology as a means to a million different ends, rather than any kind of end in itself. He remains committed to exploring the points at which the metals studio and digital technology collide, and he is determined to make jewelry that people want to wear.

CS: There are numerous artists whom I would describe as creating "fresh" work today, and it is hard to single out one or two—but here goes. I love the poignant use of taxidermy birds in The Idiots' jewelry, as well as their newer, purely conceptual and experiential projects. Their work makes me think and makes me smile. They keep me wanting to see what comes next. Likewise for emiko oye. I can't get her neckpieces out of my mind. They are fun and whimsical but at the same time deeply rooted in jewelry history. She is definitely one to watch. And I continue to be fascinated by what is being created with CAD by artists such as Arthur Hash. I believe that we are only seeing the tip of the iceberg in terms of combining concepts and aesthetics with this newer technology.

SR: Did you notice any recurring tendencies or predominant themes throughout the entries? Were you able to get a read on any larger trends in the field?

CS: I am not sure I saw much recurrence of specific motifs, but I certainly noticed two related ideas. First, there seems to be a strong resurgence of narrative work, with elements of figuration or storytelling. There was also definitely more representational work as opposed to that which is purely abstract or conceptual. I also saw a lot of historicism: artists looking at Victoriana or earlier eras and integrating aspects of design or customs within their new pieces.

LB: I feel that we selected a lot of works that incorporated enameling and color, which are always exciting to see. As for trends in the entire pool of submissions, I saw a lot of really traditional metalwork. And I agree with Cindi about the narrative work being predominant.

CS: It's important to stress that during our consideration we looked just at the art and were not concerned with resumes, artist's statements, etcetera. There were of course certain artists whom we recognized because of our professional experiences. In these cases we were careful not let our judgment of an applicant be colored by our familiarity. And there were many instances in which we recused ourselves from considering work by people that we knew or, in my case, who were already in the MFA Houston's collection.

LB: When I did finally look at some of the supporting materials of the artists we picked, I counted that something like 23 of them have MFAs and 4 have a BFA; only a couple do not have

THE IDIOTS
Industrial Evolution III: Skull Bird, 2009
forged iron, taxidermy bird, textile embroidery
14 ⅛ x 14 ⅛ x 17 ¼"

Clearly it is not a prerequisite for doing great work, but the number of MFA grads in this issue does speak to the value of having an opportunity to develop one's work within an academic setting.

traditional degrees. And 17 of them had gotten their MFA degree in the last 3 years. This kind of makes sense, given that we were searching for fresh work and emerging ideas and this would very likely come from younger artists or students. But I was rather appalled to find that we had chosen such a large percentage of grads from SUNY New Paltz, Cranbrook, and RISD. I guess I'm not totally surprised, but it makes metalwork seem like a really small and incestuous field.

SR: What does this yield of artists reflect about the field's educational institutions, and the role of academic training or background?

CS: I don't work within the academic system, but I am still very curious about it. I think the statistics that Lola gave about the final selection are really interesting and do make a statement about the education system today in jewelry and metalsmithing. There is something to be said for having time in an academic setting when you can experiment, research, and think in an unfettered way. And these programs are usually led by dynamic artists, most of whom maintain their own studio practice and can act as mentors, not only in terms of craft and skills but also in terms of navigating the field. Yet on the other hand we chose a few artists who don't have a traditional degree.

SR: It may seem like a stretch to quote the animated film *Ratatouille* in this context, but it contains a line that says: "A great cook can come from anywhere, but not everyone can be a great cook." So sometimes a great artist can emerge from an academic environment, but one can also emerge from other places or backgrounds. It is this age-old question of, where do the finest artists come from and what are the conditions in which they can best develop?

LB: I realize that not everyone who comes into my class has the raw material to be a great artist. It's one of the challenges of being an educator. I try to help lead students into becoming the best artist that they can be, but that does not always mean that they will become a *great* artist. That is the conundrum of higher education. I can teach people to think critically, and all of my students progress to a tremendous degree, but that doesn't necessarily make them into true artists. I don't have an MFA, which for years gave me a bit of an inferiority complex. It is interesting to be at this point in the field where an MFA is a necessity in some ways; it has become the status quo. Clearly it is not a prerequisite for doing great work, but the number of MFA grads in this issue does speak to the value of having an opportunity to develop one's work within an academic setting. So I don't think it is a coincidence that over two-thirds of the artists here have a graduate degree.

CS: There is clearly something luxurious, in the best possible way, about having those years in school as an undergraduate or graduate student. One is able to try out different things, to learn new skill sets, and to step out of one's own comfort zone. And you don't realize how much of a luxury it is until you leave that academic environment.

EMIKO OYE
Blue Steel, 2009
From series "My First Royal Jewels Jewellery Collection"
repurposed LEGO® and elastic, sterling silver
14 ½ x 14 ½ x 2"
(inspired by necklace of blue-tinted steel, diamonds, zircons and pearls by Maison Boucheron, 1890)

SR: Within art schools today, departments are increasingly closing and areas of concentration are merging to form new more inclusive areas of material study. Regarding the practice of metalsmithing and jewelry, where do you draw the line? When is metals not metals anymore, and when is jewelry not jewelry?

CS: In my personal experience at the MFAH there are no hard and fast definitions of what jewelry is and is not. We don't have limits in respect to how we show or interpret the work. We look at the museum collections as a whole, which I think is healthy. And I like seeing a wide range of works, those that uphold the traditions and those that may upset any commonly held definitions within the field.

LB: This is a really interesting question. In some ways I agree with Cindi, in that I'm not interested in putting up some kind of stone wall to contain the parameters of what I think the field is. But I am also concerned with history and tradition, and I think a lot about the regard for making. I don't mean that the artist necessarily has to make the work himself, but there should still be a concern for what the process is that can differentiate between a piece of sculpture and a piece that fits well within the confines of metals. With regard to jewelry, it is more open. I think an installation could be jewelry. One of the questions I constantly put out to my students, who keep tripping over this traditional notion of jewelry's scale, is: How do you know when a brooch is too big to be a brooch anymore—unless you make a brooch that is too big to be a brooch? Sometimes it is self-selecting: if you think you are part of the field, then maybe you are. It is a way of thinking about objects and an ideology of that history and a regard for making and process.

SR: Are there any trends in the field that you wish would go away? If you could play art police and put a ban on certain tendencies and practices, what would those be?

LB: I would like people to stop talking about their emotions as if they are a justification for the work. I have a very open mind about what I hope can happen in this field. I don't need work to be highly conceptual, but the way that people talk and write about their work is significant. The artist's statement has become an increasingly important criterion and should solidify one's position on their work. But ultimately I want the work to stand on its own. I do not want to privilege the words over the work, or to even *have* to read an artist's statement.

CS: I agree with Lola. I am particularly sensitive about the way artists present their work, especially when I am seeing it for the first time. Artists should concentrate on explaining their concept and pieces clearly and not worry so much about crafting a dense and overly academic or emotional artist statement. Statements can hurt as much as help the presentation and understanding of the art.

Suzanne Ramljak is editor of Metalsmith.

ANJA EICHLER

My goal is to work into the material in order to alienate it.

ANJA EICHLER
Naughty Rabbit (brooch), 2010
work glove, steel
2 x 4 x 4 ½"
PHOTO: FEDERICO CAVICCHIOLI

ANJA EICHLER
Mare (brooch), 2010
work glove, silk thread, steel
5 x 7 ½ x 9"
PHOTO: FEDERICO CAVICCHIOLI

ANDREA WAGNER
The Milk Factory (brooch), 2010
silver, agate quartz crystals, seed pearls, bone china porcelain, glass, synthetic resin
3 1/8 x 2 3/4 x 1 5/8"
PHOTO: ANDREA WAGNER

ANDREA WAGNER

The large diversity of materials and forms in this series have come to serve as overlapping impressions of an extended travelogue.

NATALIE SMITH

I like the pieces to have a constantly changing structure and, once completed, begin their transient lives.

NATALIE SMITH
Marvellous Medicine (brooch), 2010
plastic, textiles, steel, sugar
5 ½ x 2 ½ x 2 ¾"
PHOTO: NATALIE SMITH

SUZANNE BEAUTYMAN

Frozen in a state of decay, the care and consideration once present have fallen victim to external elements, leaving behind remnants of a pride in ownership and coveted past.

SUZANNE BEAUTYMAN
Bed & Toys (brooches), 2009
forged steel, silver, enamel, ceramic decal
each approx 3 x 2 ½ x 2"
PHOTO: SUZANNE BEAUTYMAN

SUZANNE BEAUTYMAN
House, 2009
steel, silver, enamel, ceramic decal
3 ½ x 2 x 1 ½"
PHOTO: SUZANNE BEAUTYMAN

KEVIN HUGHES

I cannot go back in time, but in making I am able to capture fragments of the past.

KEVIN HUGHES
Garnish, 2010
painted wood
1 ¼ x ¾ x ¾"
PHOTO: KAREN PHILIPPI

JIM BOVÉ

Pages of drawings have been produced as I searched for new ideas to create in metal, and I wondered how to re-create that immediacy in wearable art.

JIM BOVÉ
Drawing IV (brooch), 2010
copper, sterling silver, gesso
1 ½ x 2 x 1/16"
PHOTO: JIM BOVÉ

MARY HALLAM PEARSE

I seek to examine how jewelry functions as an image, a means to construct desire, and the consequence of transfer from image to object and back to image.

MARY HALLAM PEARSE
Feeding Desire (brooch),
2008 (rear view)
sterling silver, aluminum,
pearls, glass
3 ½ x 2 ½ x ½"
PHOTO: WALKER
MONTGOMERY

MARY HALLAM PEARSE
That Little Something
(brooch), 2008
sterling silver, aluminum,
pearls, glass
2 ¼ x 2 ⅝ x ½"
PHOTO: WALKER MONTGOMERY

RYAN THOMAS PETERS

My aim is to reveal the humor, seriousness, and utterly bizarre qualities of the often private, human sensual experience.

RYAN THOMAS PETERS
Ribbon Cuff, 2010, from the "Erotic Theatre" series
24k gold plate, copper, brass, sterling silver
9 x 5 x 4 ½"

KATIE REARICK
Untitled, 2010
sterling silver, wax, paper, thread, steel, found objects
12 x 10 x 4 ½"
PHOTO: KATIE REARICK

KATIE REARICK

I am interested in the conversations or memories that an object can resurface.

GABRIEL CRAIG AND AMY WEIKS
The General and his Lady, 2010
copper, sterling, brass, iron, stainless steel, coins
5 x 2 ½ x ½"
PHOTO: GABRIEL CRAIG AND AMY WEIKS

GABRIEL CRAIG AND AMY WEIKS

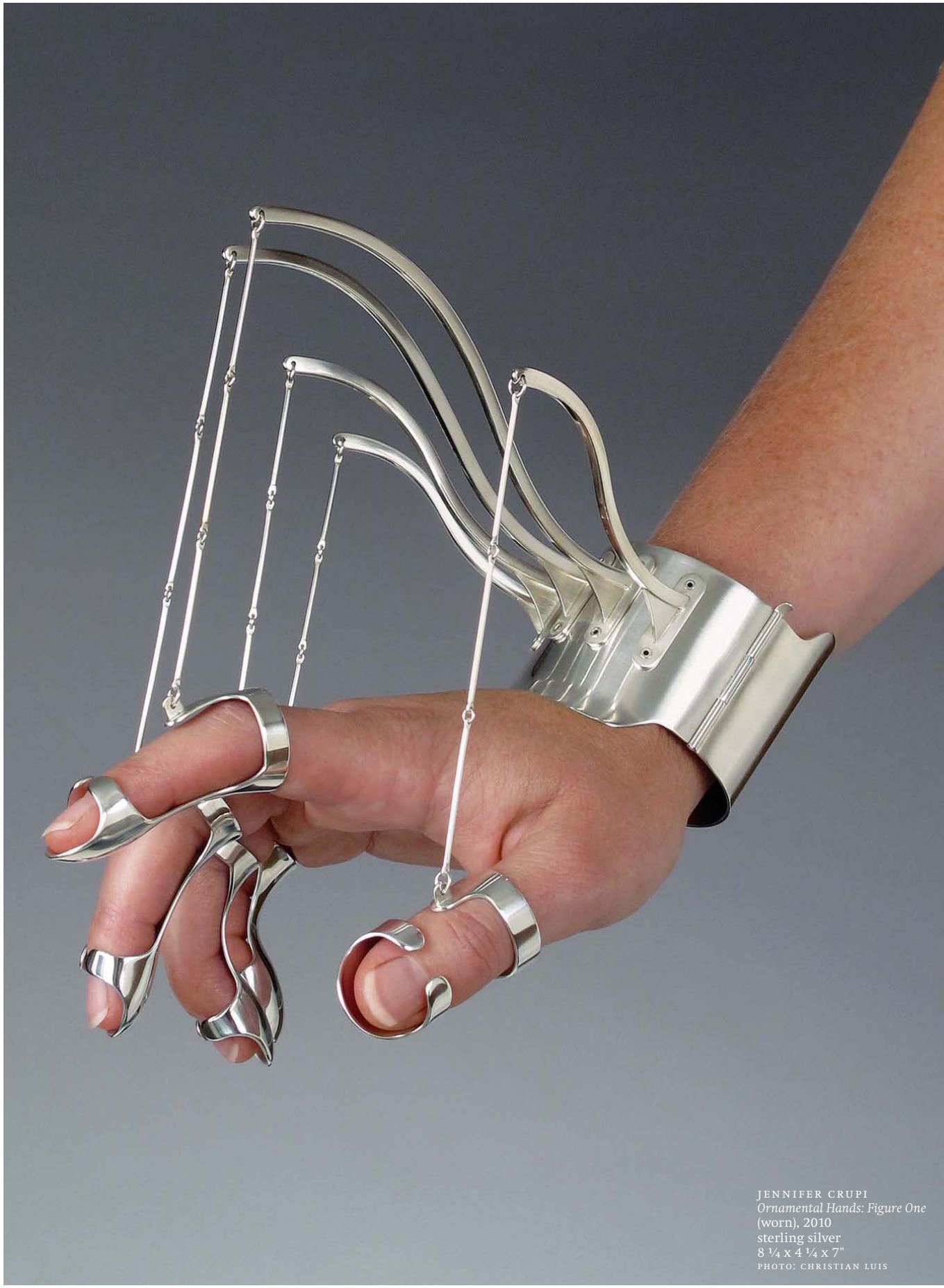
The combined language of the brooches participates in contemporary culture with references to Steampunk, couture fashion accessories, and designer t-shirt graphics.

GABRIEL CRAIG AND
AMY WEIKS
Puffy Queen: Animal Tamer, 2010
sterling, shibuichi, brass,
14k gold, stainless steel, coins
5 ¼ x 3 ¼ x ½"
PHOTO: GABRIEL CRAIG AND AMY WEIKS

JENNIFER CRUPI

Rather than wearing a bracelet to adorn your hand, why not wear a bracelet that positions your hand in a decorative and elegant way?

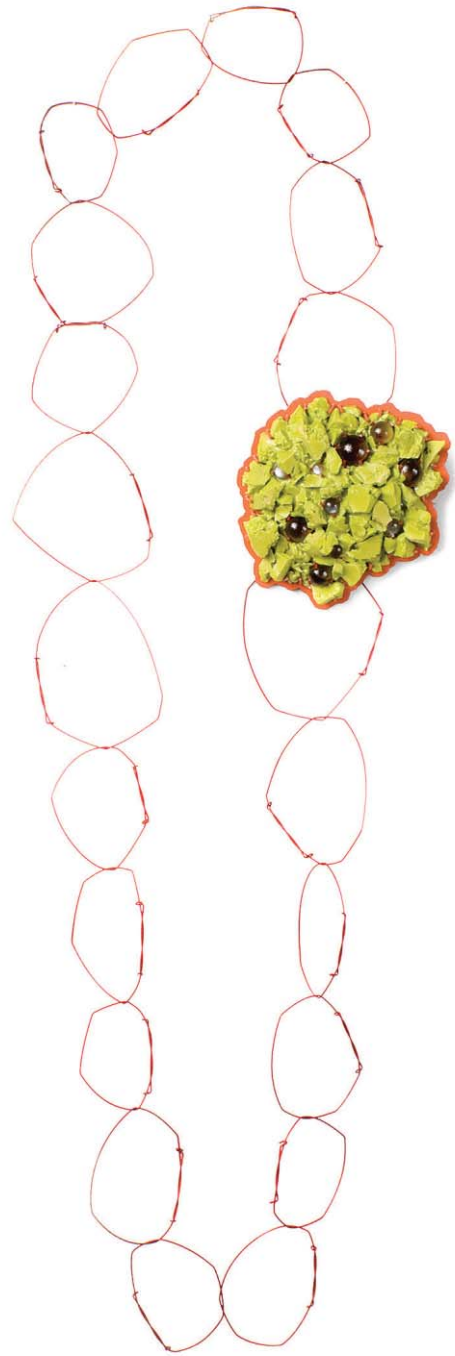
JENNIFER CRUPI
Ornamental Hands: Figure One (with display), 2010
sterling silver, acrylic, inkjet print on vellum
8 ½ x 5 ½ x 15"
PHOTO: CHRISTIAN LUIS



JENNIFER CRUPI
Ornamental Hands: Figure One (worn), 2010
sterling silver
8 ¼ x 4 ¼ x 7"
PHOTO: CHRISTIAN LUIS

TIMOTHY McMAHON

I see my work as a hybrid of two aesthetics; structured and predetermined design merged with the unbridled growth of pathologies.



TIMOTHY MCMAHON
LumpBrG[+Nk], 2010
copper, brass, spring steel, vitreous enamel, resin, black moonstone, quartz, powder coating
23 ¼ x 3 x 1"
PHOTO: TIMOTHY MCMAHON

SETH PAPAC
orangeshagfauxwood (necklace that holds one removable necklace and objects), 2010
silver, brass, copper, steel, enamel, wood, plastic, rubber, wool, paint, gold leaf
24 x 15 x 6"
PHOTO: SETH PAPEC

SETH PAPAC

Jewelry for, about, reflecting on a character provides the conceptual focus of the work.

SIDNEY CALDWELL DEAGHLAN

This current series exists in the liminal space of covering—for protection, security, to identify and distinguish what we are and what we want to be.

SIDNEY CALDWELL DEAGHLAN
Cameo 1, 2010
wool, cotton, copper, silver
3 x 2 ½"
PHOTO: SIDNEY CALDWELL DEAGHLAN

ROBERT LONGYEAR

I'm drawn to buildings as metaphor for system breakdowns–and as opportunities to learn more about how humans interface with the world through architecture.

ROBERT LONGYEAR
Insular Eights 04, 2010
sterling silver, steel, copper, insulation, romance novel pages, wax
3 ½ x 3 x 1 ½"
PHOTO: DON CASPER

ADRIANE DALTON

These works are an amalgam of truth and fiction, but it is my hope that each piece allows viewers to extract their own stories.

ADRIANE DALTON
A Rabbit as the King of Ghosts, 2010
enamel on copper, sterling silver, stainless steel
1 ½ x 1 ¼ x ¾"
PHOTO: RYANN CASEY

STEPHANIE TOMCZAK
Coral Carrier Necklace, 2010
electroformed copper,
leaded enamel, polymer clay,
coral, 18k gold
2 ½ x 3 x 1"
PHOTO: ROGER SCHREIBER

STEPHANIE TOMCZAK

Living in a time that moves so fast, I believe that it is important to take pleasure in the simple beauties that surround us.

DEVIN RAGOTZY

I form unique pieces that resonate from a place within us that recognizes the full cycle of life and death as a thing of beauty.

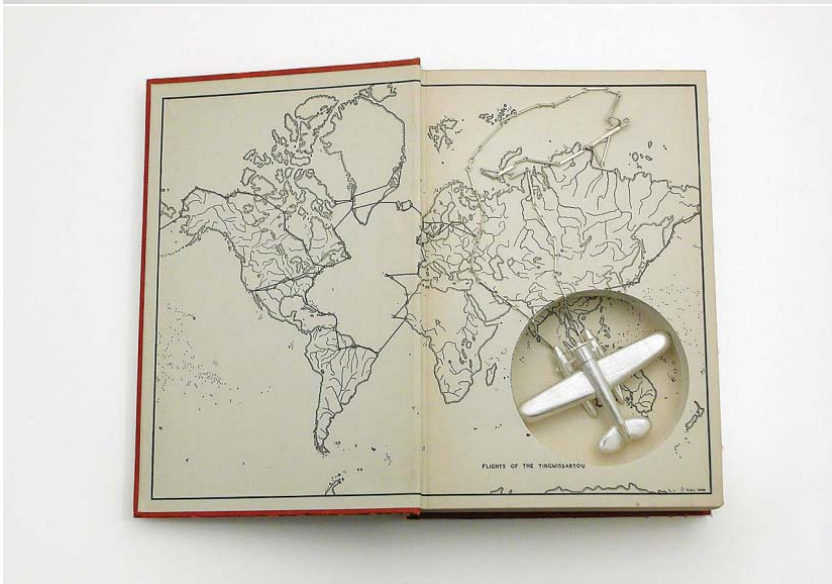
DEVIN RAGOTZY
Leaf Package Necklace, 2010
vinyl, leaves, silver, thread
13 x 7 x 2"
PHOTO: DEVIN RAGOTZY

EDGAR MOSA
Month Three
(neckpiece), 2010
wood
12 x 12 x 3"
PHOTO: EDGAR MOSA

EDGAR MOSA

Trees are like people—it's not like you can just walk up to them and expect to get along.

SONDRA SHERMAN
Listen the Wind! (pendant) from "Found Subjects" series, 2010
sterling silver
2 ½ x 3 x ¾"
PHOTO: LUNA PERRI



Listen the Wind! (pendant in altered book) from "Found Subjects" series, 2010
sterling silver, altered book
8 x 10 ½ x 1 ½"
PHOTO: LUNA PERRI

SONDRA SHERMAN

The viewer is offered another context for interaction and association in the location of the jewelry piece in the book that inspired it.

SARA PFAU

I attempt to promote historical awareness and ask viewers to reconsider their post-industrial ambivalence toward bridges and other utilitarian structures.

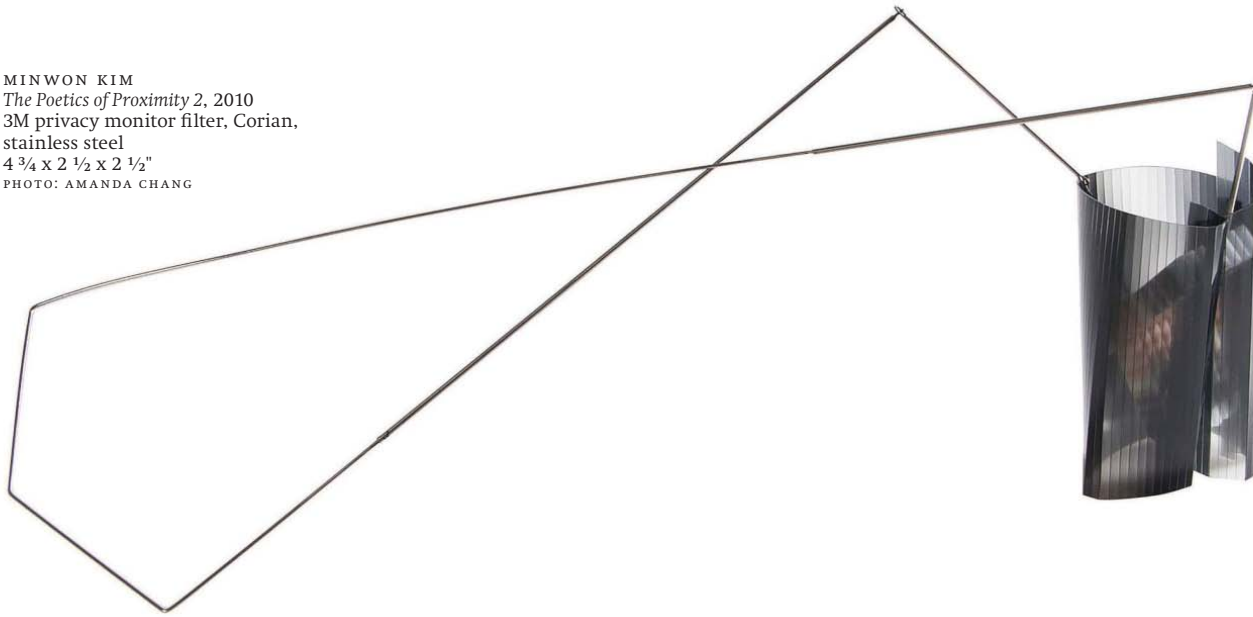
SARA PFAU
Thaddeus Kosciusko Twin Bridges: Juan de Fuca Blue Brooch, 2010
copper, sterling silver, brass, blue poly tarp, oil paint
3 x 4 x ¾"
PHOTO: SARA PFAU

ANDREA MILLER

Industrially made parts are reconstructed and interpreted, then paired with the human body to symbolize human functions within the modern world.

ANDREA MILLER
Conditioner, 2010
brass, aluminum, powder coat
36 x 18 x 12"
PHOTO: JIM ESCALANTE

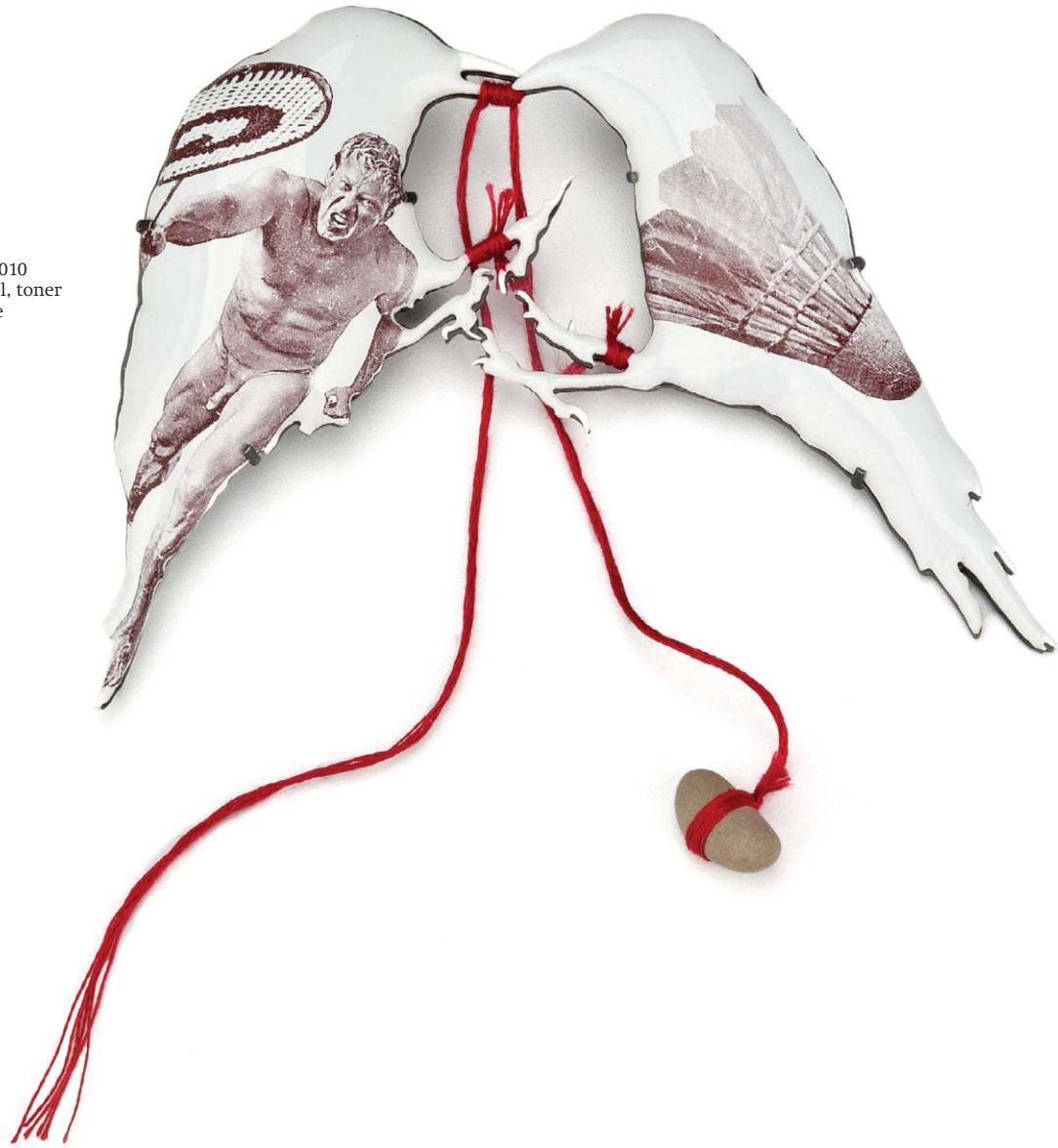
ANDREA MILLER
Conditioner, 2010 (detail)
PHOTO: ANDREA MILLER



MINWON KIM
The Poetics of Proximity 2, 2010
3M privacy monitor filter, Corian, stainless steel
4 ¾ x 2 ½ x 2 ½"
PHOTO: AMANDA CHANG

MINWON KIM

The awareness of my construction of a space passes through sequences of divided spaces, of discoveries, and of pauses.



ANDREW KUEBECK
Two Birds With One Stone, 2010
fine silver, copper, enamel, toner decal, thread, found stone
3 ½ x 4 ½ x ¾"
PHOTO: KEVIN MONTAGUE

ANDREW KUEBECK

In these pieces I hoped to explore my troublesome relationship with our avian friends and the often irrational fears I place upon them.

NAMU CHO

Most of the patterns and motifs I use are based on Korean traditional customs, conventions, and symbolic meanings and significance.

NAMU CHO
Sahm Jok, 2010
damascene, embroidery,
24k and 22k gold, steel
4 ¼ x 1 ½ x ⅛"
PHOTO: HAP SAKWA

STEVIE B.

My current series, “Zoonoses,” takes a disturbing social issue, diseases passed from animals to humans, and adds a bit of humor to the discussion.

STEVIE B.
Mad Cow (brooch) from "Zoonoses Series," 2010
silver, patina, found object
2 ¼ x 2 ⅛ x 2 ⅛"
PHOTO: STEVEN BRIAN SAMUELS

STEVIE B.
Year of The Swine, Flu (brooch), from "Zoonoses Series," 2010
silver, patina, found object
2 x 1 ¼ x 1"
PHOTO: STEVEN BRIAN SAMUELS

NIKKY BERGMAN

Simultaneously jocular and dejected, the silver, antler, and leather forms are a simple abstraction of animal parts.

NIKKY BERGMAN
Quadruped (brooch), 2010
leather, sterling silver, pine
5 x 3 x 2"
PHOTO: KRAUTH PHOTO

ALIYAH GOLD
Mouse Trap Purse, 2010
snakeskin, brass, fabric
4 x 5 ½ x 1 ½"
PHOTO: ALIYAH GOLD

ALIYAH GOLD

Materials from animals intrigue me because they maintain the resemblance of the animal from which they were removed.

JENNIFER TRASK

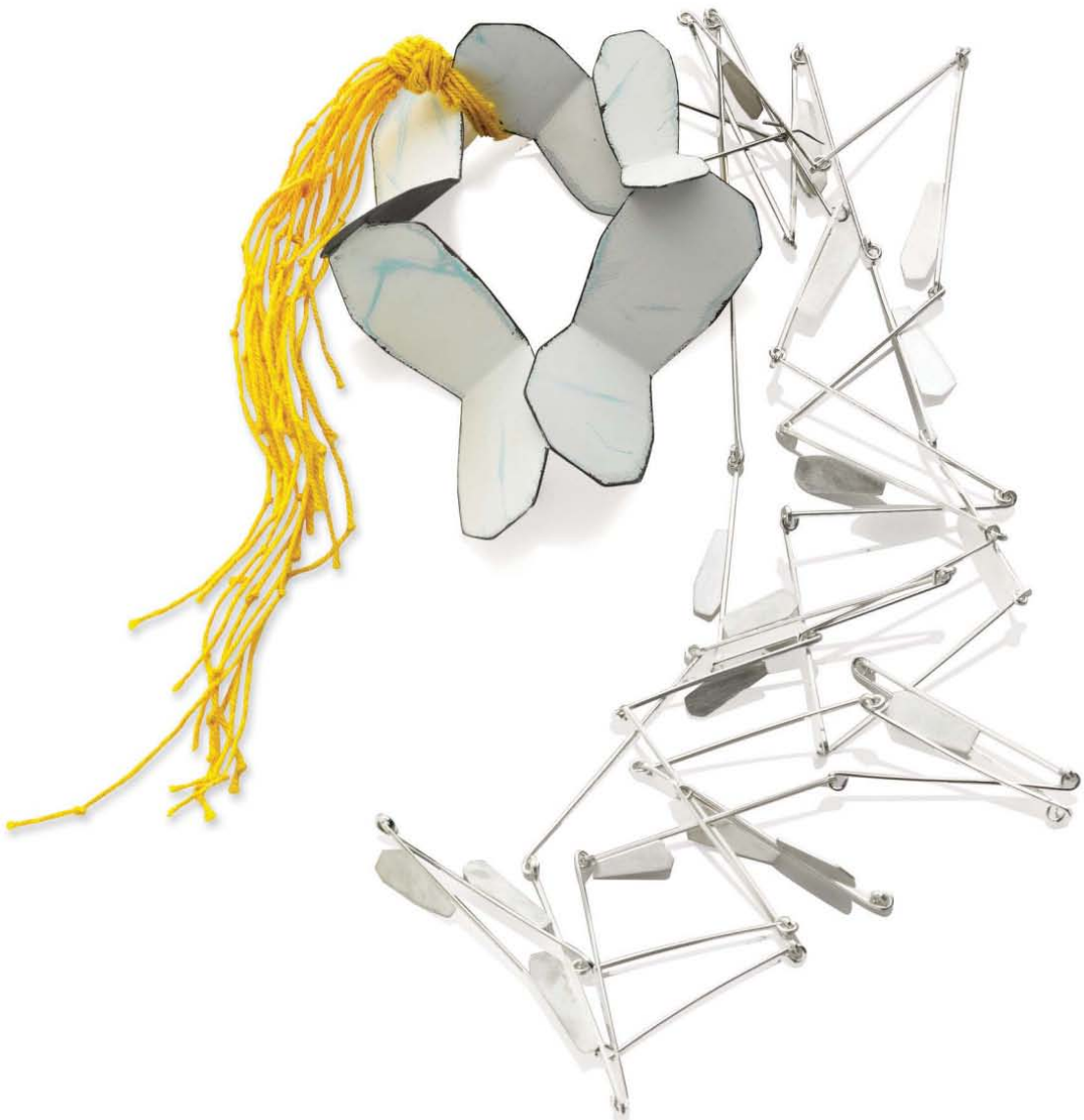
This aggregate of visceral and intellectual, raw and refined, drapes the shoulders, in nearly direct contact with the collarbones of the wearer.

JENNIFER TRASK
Acanthus Necklace, 2010
found antlers, 17th-century Italian frame parts, 23k gold leaf, 18k wire
24 x 12 x 5"
PHOTO: JENN TRASK

JENNIFER TRASK
Garland Necklace, 2010
antlers, bones, teeth, found bone objects, resin, diamond
4 x 12 x 10"
PHOTO: JENN TRASK

AMY TAVERN

I am intrigued by the accumulated history graffiti conveys via layers of marks and how antique jewelry depicts specific time periods.



AMY TAVERN
Brooch with Chain and Tassel, 2010
sterling silver, spray paint, cotton
36 x 3 ½ x 1"
PHOTO: HANK DREW

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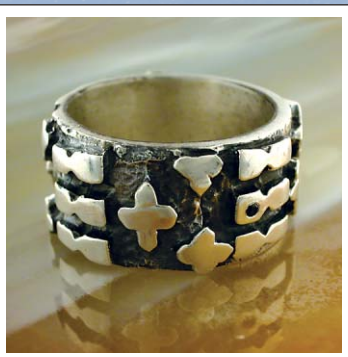

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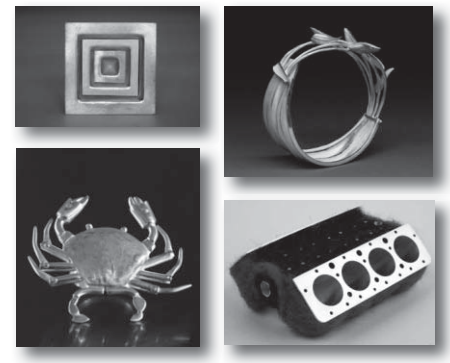

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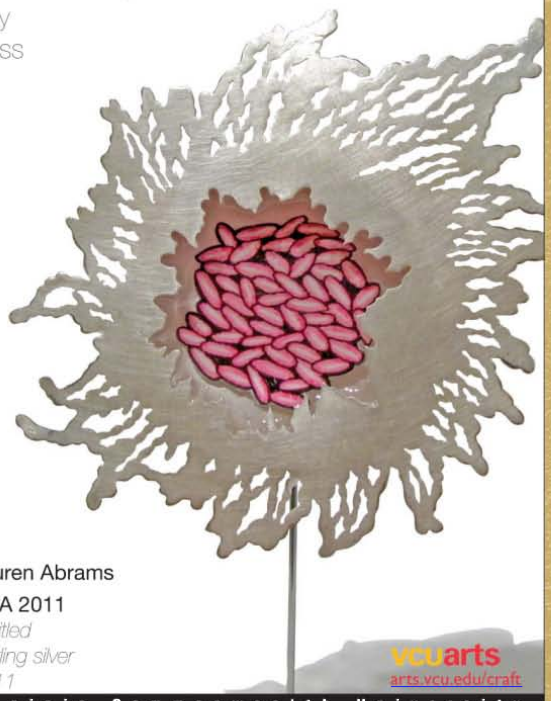

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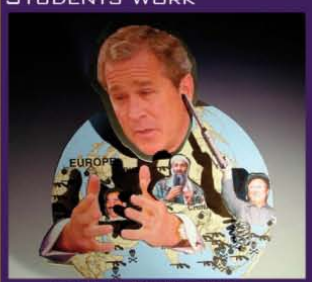

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Spiculum Jewelry
Above: "Let's Party" by Betty Helen Longhi; photo by artist. Pendant; Sterling silver, niobium and pearls

Right: "Rivers and Canyons II" by Cynthia Eid. Sterling, 18KYG, and Rhodolite Garnets, 7" x 7" x 1" Neckpiece

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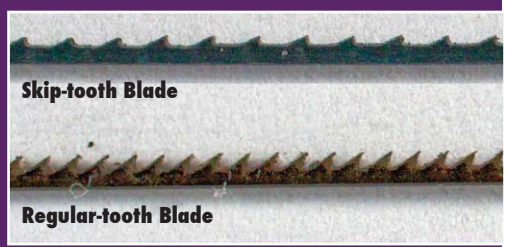
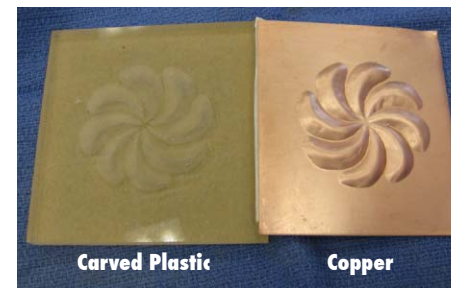


A couple of years ago, I asked the owner of Allcraft, Tevel Herbstman, about better burs for carving acrylic to make embossing dies. My students and I really like the burs he found for us—large coarse burs for removing lots of material quickly, and smaller burs for finer work as well. Though the smaller burs are coarser than typical burs made for metalworking, they leave a fairly smooth finish on plastics and waxes.

After years of experimenting with spiral blades, round diamond blades, and coarse jewelers' blades, I have found that skip-tooth blades are great for cutting plastics and waxes. Allcraft stocks them in a wide range of sizes—I usually like a #2 for cutting a simple silhouette die out of ¼" acrylic; a finer blade is good for a complex shape; a coarser blade is good for ripping through a big block of wax or plastic. The skip tooth blades feel easier to use for plastic and wax, because they have a smaller saw kerf—being a narrower blade, they remove less material. Also, with fewer teeth per inch, these blades move through the material more easily.

Plastic dies were used in a hydraulic press to emboss the metal samples shown. Urethane pushes annealed metal sheet against the die, creating a detailed design on the side of the metal next to the die, and a less detailed inversed design on the other side of the metal sheet. The metal thickness does not change much during embossing, which means that the metal is stronger after embossing—even if the metal is annealed, the formed metal is stronger than flat metal. Roller printed metal has areas that have been thinned, where a die (paper, feather, etc.) is pushed into the metal by the steel rollers. The second example at the right shows how changes in thickness and hardness of metal create different effects with the same die—thicker, stiffer brass is soft and fluid-looking, and thinner, softer copper is more crisply detailed.



Artwork above by Michael Foster. Artwork below by Cynthis Eid.

Carving Tips

Though it is possible to draw a design directly on the die for carving, I usually design on paper, then double-stick tape the design to the center of the plastic. The more material there is around the carving, the stronger the die will be. I learned this the hard way when I cut multiple designs on one piece of plastic and the die broke when I used it in the press. Similarly, the deeper the carving, the thicker the die needs to be.

At workshops, I teach students to start by outlining the shape, cutting through the paper design into the plastic. Then, remove the paper, and carve the interior. To keep control of the burs, I pull the bur towards me, working against the rotation of the bur. I carve towards an edge in the design, or along a line.

Acrylic die and earrings by Kiki Taron Kinney.

David Kinney

If the design has sharp points, I try to avoid cracks by finishing with very small round burs, so that the shape looks like it has sharp points, but is actually rounded. A truly sharp, pointed cut in the acrylic creates a stress point that is likely to crack. Rounding the point spreads the stresses, making a crack less likely.

The snowflake die by Kiki Taron Kinney shows that you can rub across the die face with a marker to create more contrast, making it easier to see the carving for further refinement. A quick way to check on the die is to press clay into the depression. When the clay impression looks good, you're ready to press metal.

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metalsmith index of advertisers vol. 31 no.4

Aaron Faber . . . . . Cover
Allcraft. 62, 63
American Craft Week 5
Arrowmont School of Arts & Crafts. 60
Atelier Hg 57
Atlanta Contemporary Jewelry Show 7
Auto Trac, Inc. 69
Billanti Casting Co., Inc. 67
Chris's Cables 64
Contemporary Jewelry Design Group 8
Conner Jewelers School 61
Creative Metalworks School of Design 58
Davide Bigazzi Studio 61
Downeast Trading 72
Élise Bergeron 56
Ethical Metalsmiths. 66
Facèré Jewelry Art Gallery 54
Galerie Noel Guyomarc'h Bijoux d'Art 54
Gallery Loupe 6
Gem & Lapidary Wholesalers 64
GIA. 58
Greater Denton Arts Council 56
Green Jewelry News. 66
Hauser & Miller 70
Idyllwild Arts 60
Janis Kerman Design 57
Kendall College of Art and Design of FSU. 59
Larry Paul Casting 64
MagiAstra 57
Metalliferous. 71
Metalsmith 54, 56, 58, 71
MJSA 68
Mobilia Gallery. 53
Myron Toback, Inc. 66
Noble 65
Ornamentum Gallery 3
Otto Frei . . . . . Cover
Patina Gallery 54
Penland School of Crafts. 60
R.W. Manufacturing. 67
Reactive Metals Studio 67
Revere Academy of Jewelry Arts 59
Rio Grande . . . . . Cover
Schlaifer's Enameling Supplies 69
SNAG 64
SOFA Chicago 9
Studio Jewelers, Ltd. 60
Trunk Show - SNAG Conference 2011. 55
United Precious Metal Refining 69
University of Iowa 61
Vcella Kllns, inc. 71
Virginia Commonwealth University 59
Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian. 56
Yael Sonia 1

metalsmith+SNAG Website+SNAG News index of webvertisers

These advertisers are also available through live links on SNAG's website and live links inside each issue of the digital SNAG News.

Arrowmont School of Arts & Crafts	arrowmont.org	60
Atlanta Contemporary Jewelry Show	atlantacontemporaryjewelryshow.com	7
Chris's Cables	chriscables.com	64
Contemporary Jewelry Design Group	CJDGjewelers.org	8
Conner Jeweler's School	jewelersschool.com	61
Downeast Trading	downeasttrading.com	72
Gallery Loupe	galleryloupe.com	6
Gem & Lapidary Wholesaler	glwshows.com	64
GIA	gia.edu	58
Hauser & Miller	hauserandmiller.com	70
Idyllwild Arts	idyllwildarts.org	60
Kendall College of Art and Design of FSU	kcad.edu	59
Larry Paul Casting	lpcasting.com	64
Metalliferous	metalliferous.com	71
Mobilia Gallery	mobilia-gallery.com	53
Myron Toback, Inc.	myrontoback.com	66
Noble	noblepack.com	65
Otto Frei	ottofrei.com	Cover
Patina Gallery	patina-gallery.com	54
Penland School of Crafts	penland.org	60
R.W. Manufacturing	rwmfg.com/info	67
Rio Grande	riogrande.com	Cover
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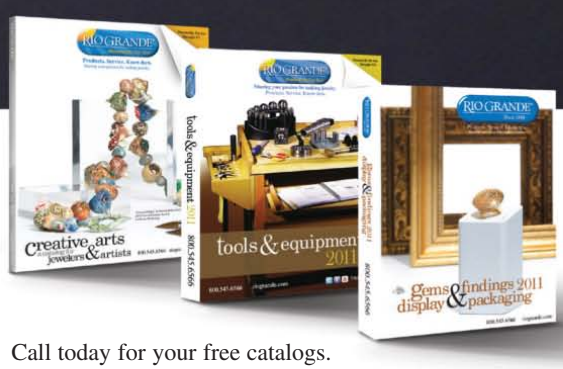

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